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Fifty-sixth session
Agenda items 25, 27, 35, 39, 41, 42, 78, 95, 96, 99, 101, 107, 109, 117, 119 and 166

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Letter dated 26 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On the instruction of my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you the statement of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, at the opening of the thirtieth ordinary session of the Al-Shourah Council of the State of Qatar, held in Doha on 19 November 2001 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 25, 27, 35, 39, 41, 42, 78, 95, 96, 99, 101, 107, 109, 117, 119 and 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nassir Abdulaziz **Al-Nasser**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 26 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

Text of a statement by His Highness the Amir

In the name of God and with His blessing, I declare open this thirtieth regular session of the Shura (Advisory) Council.

We meet today, as we do every year, to begin a new session in the work of a Council whose role in enhancing objective dialogue for the advancement of the public interest and the strengthening of popular participation in the domain of legislative policy we have always appreciated.

Given that the Shura Council represents a key stage in the evolution of the State's institutions, I look forward with you and with the public at large to the stage that will follow the promulgation of a permanent Constitution. The commission entrusted with the drafting of the Constitution is making a praiseworthy effort to complete it on schedule and to incorporate in those provisions we all wish to see a tangible reality for a community capable of meeting the needs of its time and of coping with the achievements that human progress will bring in years to come. I am confident that the traditions the Shura Council has established in exercising its functions in past years and the great and variegated expertise it has acquired will lay a firm foundation for an elected representative council that will not emerge in a vacuum or grope its way among the provisions of the permanent Constitution but will instead find in these traditions and attainments assistance and support that will guard it from pitfalls and light the way for it to achieve, God willing, everything we hope for.

At the beginning of this year, world economic growth began to slow down, and it has shown signs of contracting. The events of 11 September have had their own adverse repercussions for various economic activities, to increase the risks of a continued slowdown in economic growth in the industrialized countries.

This in turn has had a negative impact on most countries of the world, and the prices of various commodities, especially oil, have fallen as a consequence. The slowdown in world economic growth has greatly reduced demand for oil since the beginning of the year, and it is anticipated that oil prices will not stabilize in the immediate future. While the high oil prices of the past had positive consequences for us, the additional revenues realized as a result of those high prices were used to pay off some of the debts resulting from recurring annual budget deficits in past years and to fund major industrial projects. However, like countries in other regions of the world, Qatar has not been spared the adverse consequences of the crisis, and the contraction in world demand for oil and the steep drop in oil prices mean that a decline in State revenues and a slowdown in rates of economic growth are to be expected.

Our country has made great strides in the implementation of programmes to strengthen the national economy, and it has achieved sustained growth in the hydrocarbon industries sector. We have not, however, achieved our goals with regard to intermediate and light industries. The latter industries depend primarily on private-sector activity, since they do not require large amounts of capital. In order to stimulate the role of the private sector in this field, the State has acquired full ownership of the Industrial Development Bank so as to create an appropriate mechanism to implement the relevant projects in cooperation with the private sector. It will also endeavour to eliminate the administrative and bureaucratic obstacles that impede the private sector in this regard.

We affirm our determination and resolve to maintain our established policies for the implementation of more industrial projects and the development of infrastructure in accordance with the programmes and plans approved, to sponsor the enactment of the necessary laws to encourage foreign direct investment, to provide numerous lucrative incentives to investors, and to enhance the investment climate so as to increase the contribution of foreign investment to economic projects. The establishment of the Supreme Council for Economic Affairs and Investment perhaps reflects our concern to support and stimulate the economic development process in order to diversify the production base and meet the need to

cope with emerging global developments and profit from the opportunities that present themselves.

In our concern for the development process to include all State sectors, the Government is making a major effort to upgrade our educational system and to improve scientific and technical qualifications with the assistance of international consultants of proven effectiveness.

I must take this occasion to express our satisfaction at the worthy results achieved by the fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization that was held a few days ago in Doha and to address our sincere thanks to all those who contributed to the success of the Conference, and especially those who volunteered, for the efforts they made in this regard.

Affirming our deep affinity with the Gulf, Arab and Islamic communities, we in the State of Qatar stress that our foremost foreign policy priorities are to strengthen our relations with our fellow States in the Gulf Cooperation Council and to augment our ties of brotherhood and integration with them. We look forward to the forthcoming summit meeting of the Council to be held in the Sultanate of Oman, and we hope that it will be successful and productive and will have positive results for our countries and peoples. We are certain that the insight of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, the sponsor of the summit, will contribute to its success as well as to the enhancement of solidarity and cohesion and the promotion of the common interests and goals of the people of the region.

We have all noted the barbarous acts of terrorism that were committed against the United States on 11 September last and in which thousands of innocent civilians were killed. We have condemned these acts in the strongest terms and have stressed that the perpetrators must be pursued and brought to justice. The whole world having now grasped the danger posed by such criminality to the future of the human race and to its advancement, well-being and stability, it is unanimous in perceiving the need to confront this phenomenon and rid the world of its evils.

The Muslim countries have been in the forefront in this respect, and not only in unanimously condemning these heinous acts of terrorism at the emergency meeting of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers that was held in Doha in October 2001. Indeed, several years before that they adopted a draft convention for the suppression of terrorism and urged Islamic States to accede to it. The Arab and Muslim countries, however, find themselves in the position of having to defend themselves against dubious attempts to stigmatize Arabs and Muslims with the charge of terrorism. But terrorism is not the monopoly of a particular religion, of a specific region or of one race rather than another, just as it is incompatible with all prescriptions of religious law and most conspicuously those of true Islam, urging as it does benevolence, tolerance and love, not violence, enmity and hate. We hope that the Arab and Muslim countries will take vigorous steps to refute this unjust charge. It is incumbent on us to do this with the utmost vigour and, in doing so, to adopt an approach of objective dialogue based on matching argument for argument and on projecting the true image of Islam and its role in human civilization.

The Arab and Muslim countries have adopted a position of principle, which is that it is essential to differentiate between terrorism as a criminal phenomenon and the right of peoples languishing under the yoke of military occupation to free their homelands and exercise their inherent right to self-determination as guaranteed by a whole series of international covenants beginning with the Charter of the United Nations. In my statement to the United Nations General Assembly, I urged the need to define terrorism with precision on the aforesaid basis. It is perhaps to be hoped that the definition adopted by the Organization of the Islamic Conference in this context might serve as a starting point for the international efforts to be made by the United Nations in this regard and that the ongoing engagement with this phenomenon will take place under United Nations leadership in the framework of an international convention binding on States parties.

We call upon the international community to eliminate the sources of tension in the world and to solve the chronic problems that pose a threat to international peace and security and provide fertile soil for extremism and violence. We are confident that a just and lasting settlement of the Palestine issue that satisfies the legitimate aspiration of the Palestinian people to establish on its national soil an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital, an end to Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights and Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon to the internationally recognized boundaries would restore security, stability

and calm to the Middle East and allow all of its peoples without exception to enjoy the peace they have been seeking for many long years.

The harsh conditions and intense suffering of the fraternal Iraqi people arouse in us a sense of pain and bitterness. They require us to seek for ways to extricate ourselves from this critical situation and to devise appropriate political solutions that will ensure the preservation of Iraq's unity, sovereignty and independence and achieve security and stability in the region. It is also to be hoped that concerted efforts will be made by all to resolve the issue of the missing persons.

We turn the page on a year that is coming to a close, a year crowded with contrasting events that brought the world many surprises and resonated with many tragedies that do not accord with the spirit of benevolence and the propagation of peace. We must nevertheless go on. We must go on to build for more prosperous days and a brighter future, arming ourselves with knowledge, faith and the right of humanity to live in freedom and tranquillity. This will demand from us a great deal of effort and devotion. So let us look to the future of our country with optimistic eyes and with a spirit amply provided with resolve, for with will and determination we shall build the future of our country and of generations to come.